Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph 0008 *as follows.*

The invention, which is defined by the claims set out at the end of this disclosure, is intended to solve at least some of the problems noted above. *Lactobacillus* strains that have a Profile I based on *Apa* I, *Not* I, and *Xba* I digests, as shown in Figures 1A and 1B and Table 6, are provided. Preferably, the strains decrease levels of at least one of coliforms and *E. coli* within the gastrointestinal tract of an animal. Preferred strains include, but are not limited to *L. brevis* strains, *L. fermentum* strains, and *L. murinus* strains. Useful strains of the invention have been isolated from the pars oesophagea of a pig. A particularly preferred strain is *L. brevis* strain 1E-1, although any *Lactobacillus* strain having a Profile I based on *Apa* I, *Not* I, and *Xba* I digests, as shown in Figures 1A and 1B and Table 6 are expected to work in the invention.

Please replace paragraph 0009 *as follows.*

A method of feeding an animal is also provided. The method comprises feeding the animal a *Lactobacillus* strain that has a Profile I based on *Apa* I, *Not* I, and *Xba* I digests, as shown in Figures 1A and 1B and Table 6. Preferably, the strain decreases levels of at least one of coliforms and *E. coli* within the gastrointestinal tract of an animal.

Please replace paragraph 0010 *as follows.*

A direct-fed microbial is additionally provided. The direct-fed microbial includes at least one *Lactobacillus* strain that has a Profile I based on *Apa* I, *Not* I, and *Xba* I digests, as shown in Figures 1A and 1B and Table 6. The direct-fed microbial additionally includes a carrier.

Please replace paragraph 0011 as follows.

Also provided is a method of forming a direct fed microbial. In the method, a culture is grown in a liquid nutrient broth. The culture includes at least one *Lactobacillus* strain that has a

Profile I based on *Apa* I, *Not* I, and *Xba* I digests, as shown in Figures 1A and 1B and Table 6. The strain is separated from the liquid nutrient broth.

Please replace paragraph 0013 as follows.

Figure 1A shows a digital image of *Apa* I, *Not* I, and *Xba* I digests of various strains from pig 1, including strain 1E-1.

Please add the following paragraph after paragraph 0013.

Figure 1B was created by taking the digital image of Figure 1A and analyzing it with a software program (BioNumerics, Applied Maths, Belgium) used for analysis of DNA banding patterns. The software program marks each band on the gel with a mark which collectively is the fingerprint for each enzyme used in the PFG.

Please replace paragraph 0028 as follows.

Lactobacillus strains of the invention have a profile I based on *Apa* I, *Not* I and *Xba* I digests, as shown in Figures 1A-1B and Table 6 (below). Preferred *Lactobacillus* strains include, but are not limited to, *L. brevis*, *L. fermentum*, and *L. murinus*. A preferred *Lactobacillus brevis* strain is 1E-1, which was isolated from the intestinal tract of a healthy, weaned pig. Strain 1E-1 is available from the microorganism collection of the American Type Culture Collection, 10801 University Blvd., Manassas, VA 20110, under accession number PTA-6509, and was deposited on January 12, 2005.

Please replace paragraph 0035 as follows.

A direct-fed microbial of the invention includes a *Lactobacillus* strain that has a Profile I based on *Apa* I, *Not* I and *Xba* I digests, as shown in Figures 1A and 1B and Table 6. A preferred strain is the *L. brevis* strain 1E-1, although other *Lactobacillus* strains having a Profile

I can be used. A carrier can be added to the direct-fed microbial. The carrier can be a liquid carrier, a solid carrier, or any other suitable carrier. A preferred liquid carrier is a milk replacer. Milk replacers are typically milk substitutes in powdered form that are mixed with water to form a composition that resembles milk. Another preferred liquid carrier is water. Dry carriers include, but are not limited to, animal feed.

Please replace paragraph 0049 as follows.

Intestinal morphology improved when animals were fed the *Lactobacillus* strain of the invention. For instance, villus:crypt ratio was greater and the number of sulfuric goblet cells was less with supplementation with the *Lactobacillus* strain. These data indicate that supplementing with strain 1E-1 and other strains having a Profile I based on *Apa* I, *Not* I and *Xba* I digests, as shown in Figures 1A and 1B and Table 6 pre-weaning improves nursery performance and provides a healthier intestinal environment. An increase in weight at weaning in pigs fed the *Lactobacillus* strain was also observed.

Please replace paragraph 0070 as follows.

From the study described in Example 1, it was determined that the intestinal tract of healthy pigs had higher levels of lactobacilli. Genetic analysis of the lactobacilli found in healthy pigs indicated a homogenous population of strains, whereas the lactobacilli populations found in the sick pigs were heterogeneous. The majority of the isolates (59%) were identified as a single genotype (Profile I based on *Apa* I, *Not* I and *Xba* I digests) that was biochemically identified as *L. brevis*. This strain is now referred to as 1E-1 and is the *Lactobacillus* strain used in this example. Lanes 1 and 14 contain a Lambda concatamer as a molecular weight (MW) marker. Figures 1A and 1B shows *Apa* I digests (left hand lane), *Not* I digests (middle lane), and *Xba* I

digests (right hand lane) of various strains, including strain 1E-1. All *Lactobacillus* strains with a Profile I based on *Apa* I, *Not* I, and *Xba* I digests are expected to work in the invention.